

A-76 LESSONS LEARNED
From
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The following lessons learned were taken from briefings presented by the MAJCOMs. Some of the bullets have been reworded and expanded to enhance the meaning of the lesson learned based on discussions during the presentations. Additional information on the lessons learned can be obtained from the HQ AFCEA A-76 Help Desk (DSN 523-4970).

Overall

- A-76 is a base wide initiative
- Establish Competitive Sourcing office at base level
- Settle UMD early – ensure all positions are included and properly coded
- Develop business strategy early
- Training/Training/Training (A-76/PWS/MEO/Leadership/team building/etc.)
- Communication is key—don't put up firewall too early between Statement of Work (SOW)/Performance Requirements Document (PRD) and Most Efficient Organization (MEO) Teams
- Establish Command standards/thresholds/metrics
- Track Manpower during study—Military/Civilian
- Determine Vehicle costs (replacement)
- Decisions on contracting methodology and schedule can have great affect on SOW/PRD effort and delivered service
 1. Functional offices usually have little influence in these decisions
 2. Decisions should be a team effort
 3. Functional offices should play major role
 4. Wing should establish a separate dedicated office for large BOS efforts
 5. Office should have sufficient rank in charge to get results (0-6 for BOS)
 6. Establish at least two branches – SOW/PRD branch and MEO branch
 7. Contracting or Manpower should be key advisors during the process
- Attitude is critical
 1. Player's support is vital for teams to be effective
 2. Use the best and brightest employees to work on the SOW/PRD, Technical Evaluation, and MEO Teams

We Should Have Known

- Start on the right foot
- Data gathering takes the longest
- Ask yourself “How do I do that?”-analyze the process
- I never got a copy of that – make sure your documentation is up to date
- We added 40 people and the cost didn't change – “What's wrong with this picture?”
- Oh, does this impact you? - coordinate
- Appearances **DO** matter – don't do dumb things

Other Hints

- Identify Command and Base Independent Review Officers
- Mistakes during process will cost you much time and effort later-take the time to do it right the first time

Senior Leadership

- Need Senior leadership buy-in
- Establish Wing, Base, Group, and Squadron commander roles

Partnerships

- Establish communication and trust with personnel affected by the cost comparison
 1. Make Face-to-face announcements
 2. Conduct Quarterly briefings
 3. Use your Web site
 4. Conduct Town Hall meetings
 5. Use a Hot line
 6. Develop Newspaper articles

Kick-Off

- Official announcement of study to workforce
 1. Personal message from HQ commander
 2. Briefings from base leadership
 3. Questions and Answer session
- Get Information to industry (all contractors)
- If you use consultants (get them on board early)

Market Research

- A Joint effort (Contracting and Functional)
- Do Surveys
- How does industry provide the service?
- Seeing is believing or “I never thought of that”

SOW/PRD

- Don't plan for most optimistic review periods
- Plan on several iterations of reviews
- Conduct cross functional reviews
- Review the SOW/PRD slowly and carefully develop ground rules ahead of time
- HQ and the Base should exchange ideas early
- Questions and Answers need to be reviewed as if part of the SOW/PRD
- Configuration control-who has the latest version
- Workload data is critical - Identify all workload data, surges, shift work, weather related emergencies, and special functions—this is what will be bid
- Develop a strategy for collecting workload early
- Ensure SOW/PRD verbiage is consistent and proper
 1. Use “shall” instead of “will” or “should” – wording is clear & concise

2. Information is in the correct section & not double entered
- Double check any SOW/PRD reference to technical exhibits
 - Double check all regulations and form references
 - Double check all references in the SOW/PRD
 - Specify all Government and contractor furnished services and equipment
 - Identify all supported Tenants and Special Activities
 - Take into account the current level of performance attained
 - Process must be fair and above board
 1. Cannot have any semblance of partiality/conflict of interest
 2. Gaming the system is a losing proposition
 - The SOW/PRD will be performed as written regardless of who wins
 - Cannot have a different game plan depending on who will win
 3. The SOW/PRD must be fair to both the contractor and the MEO
 - Involve the National Institute for the Severely Handicapped (NISH), the National Institute for the Blind (NIB) and other “preferred” contractors in A-76 process early
 - Establish a early notification procedure for “preferred” contractors (Set time limit on expression of interest)

AFI 63-124

- Avoid Prescriptive Content in the SOW
 1. Describe what to do not how to do it
 2. Prescriptive SOW inhibits innovation & efficiencies
- Use commercial standards and determine requirements from applicable government regulations
 1. Determine what AFI’s need to be waived and which ones are mandatory?
 2. Write out required elements vs referencing them
 - Assure completeness by cross-referencing
 3. How do you specify which commercial standards apply?
 - Should not allow contractors to select which standards they bid to
 - Commercial standards may be lower than AF standards – must identify these differences
- Must maintain a level playing field for both contractor and MEO

MEOs

- MEO obtained information
 1. Get feedback from various sources
 2. HQ has experts that can help the base build a better MEO
- MEOs and existing contracts – Establish teaming arrangements
- Need a contracting advisor to MEO
- MEO revisions after source selection, before cost comparison – Know the rules
- MEO Development
 1. Begin data collection, prior to announcement
 - Initial steps similar to early phase of SOW development
 - Job analysis; operational audits (suggestion boxes)
 2. Stabilize study population at announcement

- Ensure whole functions are being studied
- 3. Communicate! Communicate! Communicate!
 - Keep everyone involved and informed
 - Tensions rise as bid opening nears
- 4. Document! Document! Document!
 - Include admin. specialist to the team
 - Makes life easier at appeal/protest time
 - Take advantage of database/spreadsheet software
- MEO innovations can be adapted by other functions outside the MEO
- Evaluate MEO innovations and adapt them wherever practical
- Preparation of MEO is a complicated process that bases consider proprietary & privileged
 1. Bases consider MEO as competitive business
 - Base Market Research (other winning MEOs, Universities, Local business) is closely protected
 - Process & Organizational innovations are closely protected
 2. MEO must be below manpower standard to be competitive
 - Reduce/eliminate positions; multi-skill; cross-utilize; minimize grades
 - Normally MEO information is held close hold until bid opening
- Tailor assistance to improve flexibility and facilitate innovation & information transfer
- Milestones/Schedules—Take Control
 1. Start MEO Development ASAP
 - PWS does not need to be completely written before starting the MEO
 - As long as major decisions on performance standards is complete
 2. Early release of Draft RFP and Draft SOW (Public review generates useful feedback)
 3. Identify and scrub regulatory requirements early (Processing of waivers take time)
- An MEO must emulate the commercial sector
 1. Innovative methods and processes
 2. Consolidating similar duties (multi-skilling)
 3. Using a broad spectrum of pay-grades
 - Less supervision & more working supervision
 - Fewer journeyman level positions (WG & GS)

Solicitation Phase

- Preproposal conference (Include briefings by XP on process and JA on ethics)
- Develop a Document library
 1. All existing services contracts
 2. As-built plans and drawings, technical orders
 3. Local publications, MOA's, MOU's
 4. Load electronic documents on EPS
- Establish major milestones

Cost Comparison

- Usually not a public bid opening
- Release cost comparison documentation IMMEDIATELY to begin appeal clock
- Administrative Appeal
 1. Limited avenue
 2. Parameters
 3. Correct valid mistakes

Source Selection

- Need broad minded experts
- It will take much more time than expected
- Use an electronic source selection software
- Plan for the manpower to support source selection

Appeals and Protests

- Both contractors and MEOs are making use of the appeals process - Extremely expensive for government
 1. Indefinite delay in contract award
 2. Ties up executive level personnel on review team
- Expect protests and appeals. Conduct all activities accordingly
 1. Document every step and preserve documentation so it can be readily retrieved
 2. Provide rationale for every decision made or rating given
 3. Make sure SOW/PRD is as clear, concise, and complete as possible
- Plan for HQ appeal process
 1. Assign team of independent management level employees
 2. Develop rules and guidelines to assure consistent results

Direct Conversion vs Cost Comparison (Native American)

- Use discretion when considering direct conversion in favor of A-76 cost comparison
- Avoid direct conversion unless function is stable and workload well documented
- Ensure resources available to fund in-house costs are re-directed to fund post-conversion contracts (Mil/Civ pay, vehicles, etc.)
- Under costing rules, contractor bid “beating” in-house cost may not translate into lower operating costs for MAJCOM
- May have lapse in CE manning prior to contract start due to PCSs
- May require some military TDY augmentation
- Program civilian billets to remain well into contract phase-in
- Hire QAE staff with proper skills and grades
- Ensure Position descriptions adequately address scope of responsibility
- Work with CPO to get the best people
- Avoid the appearance of a “conflict of interest”
- Lack of involvement in negotiations and phase-in may hinder resolution of contract problems
- Parties with key involvement in SOW development must remain part of procurement team